

A

NARRATIVE

OF THE

MOST REMARKABLE PARTICULARS

IN THE

L I F E

O F

JAMES ALBERT UKAWSAW GRONNIOSAW,

A N

AFRICAN PRINCE,

AS RELATED BY HIMSELF.

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*I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. ISAIAH. xlii. 16.*

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To which is added,

AN AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF THE CONVERSION AND  
EXPERIENCE OF A NEGRO.

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M.DCC.XC.



TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE  
COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON,  
THIS  
NARRATIVE OF MY LIFE,  
AND OF  
GOD'S WONDERFUL DEALINGS WITH ME, IS  
(THROUGH HER LADYSHIP'S PERMISSION)  
MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED,  
BY HER LADYSHIP'S  
MOST OBLIGED  
AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,  
JAMES ALBERT.



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THE

P R E F A C E.

**T**HIS account of the life and spiritual experience of JAMES ALBERT was taken from his own mouth, and committed to paper by the elegant pen of a young LADY of the town of LEOMINSTER, for her own private satisfaction, and without any intention at first that it should be made public. But she has now been prevailed on to commit it to the press, as, it is apprehended, this little history contains matter well worthy the notice and attention of every Christian reader.

Perhaps we have here, in some degree, a solution of that question, that has perplexed the minds of so many serious persons, viz. *In what manner will God deal with those benighted parts of the world where the gospel of Jesus Christ hath never reached?* Now it appears, from the experience of this remarkable person, that God does not save without the knowledge of the truth; but with respect

to those whom he hath fore-known, though born under every outward disadvantage, and in regions of the grossest darkness and ignorance, he most amazingly acts upon and influences their minds, and in the course of wisely and most wonderfully appointed providences, he brings them to the means of spiritual information, gradually opens to their view the light of his truth, and gives them full possession and enjoyment of the inestimable blessings of his gospel. Who can doubt but that the suggestion, so forcibly pressed upon the mind of ALBERT (when a boy), that there was a Being superior to the sun, moon, and stars (the objects of African idolatry), came from the Father of Lights, and was, with respect to him, the first-fruit of the display of gospel-glory? His long and perilous journey to the Coast of Guinea, where he was sold for a slave, and so brought into a Christian land, shall we consider this as the alone effect of a curious and inquisitive disposition? Shall we, in accounting for it, refer to nothing higher than mere chance and accidental circumstances? Whatever Infidels and Deists may think, I trust the Christian reader will easily discern an all-wise and omnipotent appointment and direction in these movements. He belonged to the REDEEMER of lost sinners; he was the purchase of his cross; and therefore the LORD undertook to bring him, by a way he knew not, out of darkness into his marvellous light, that he might lead him to a saving heart-acquaintance

and union with the Triune GOD in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing their trespasses. As his call was very extraordinary, so there are certain particulars exceedingly remarkable in his experience. GOD has put a singular honour upon him, in the exercise of his faith and patience, which, in the most distressing and pitiable trials and calamities, have been found to the praise and glory of GOD. How deeply it must affect a tender heart, not only to be reduced to the last extremity himself, but to have his wife and children perishing for want before his eyes! Yet his faith did not fail him: he put his trust in the LORD, and he was delivered. And at this instant, though born in an exalted station of life, and now under the pressure of various afflicting providences, I am persuaded (for I know the man), he would rather embrace the dunghill, having CHRIST in his heart, than give up his spiritual possessions and enjoyment, to fill the throne of princes. It perhaps may not be amiss to observe, that JAMES ALBERT left his native country (as near as I can guess from certain circumstances) when he was about fifteen years old. He now appears to be turned of sixty; has a good natural understanding; is well acquainted with the Scriptures, and the things of GOD; has an amiable and tender disposition; and his character can be well attested, not only at KIDDERMINSTER, the place of his residence, but likewise by many credit-

able persons in LONDON and other places.  
Reader, recommending this Narrative to  
your perusal—I am

Your faithful and obedient servant,

For CHRIST's sake,

W. SHIRLEY.



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A N  
A C C O U N T  
O F  
J A M E S A L B E R T, &c.

I WAS born in the city of Bournou. My mother was the eldest daughter of the reigning king of Zaara, of which Bournou is the chief city. I was the youngest of six children, and particularly loved by my mother; and my grandfather almost doated on me.

I had, from my infancy, a curious turn of mind : was more grave and reserved in my disposition than either of my brothers and sisters. I often teased them with questions they could not answer; for which reason they disliked me, as they supposed that I was either foolish or insane. It was certain that I was, at times, very unhappy in myself; it being strongly impressed on my mind, that there was some GREAT MAN of POWER, which resided above the sun, moon, and stars, the objects of our worship. My dear indulgent mother would bear more with me than any of my friends beside. I often raised my hand to heaven, and asked her, who lived there? was much dissatisfied when she told me, the sun, moon, and stars, being persuaded, in my own mind, that there must be some SUPERIOR POWER. I was frequently lost in wonder at the works of the creation; was afraid, and uneasy, and restless, but could not tell for what; I wanted to be informed of things that no person could tell me, and was always dissatisfied. These wonderful impressions begun in my childhood, and fol-

lowed me continually till I left my parents, which affords me matter of admiration and thankfulness.

To this moment I grew more and more uneasy every day, in so much that one Saturday (which is the day on which we keep our Sabbath) I laboured under anxieties and fears that cannot be expressed; and, what is more extraordinary, I could not give a reason for it. I rose, as our custom is, about three o'clock (as we are obliged to be at our place of worship an hour before sun-rise). We say nothing in our worship, but continue on our knees, with our hands held up, observing a strict silence till the sun is at a certain height, which I suppose to be about 10 or 11 o'clock in England; when, at a certain sign made by the priest, we get up (our duty being over), and disperse to our different houses. Our place of meeting is under a large palm-tree: we divide ourselves into many congregations, as it is impossible for the same tree to cover the inhabitants of the whole city, though they are extremely large, high, and majestic: the beauty and usefulness of them are not to be described: they supply the inhabitants of the country with meat, drink, and cloaths\*: the body of the palm-tree is very large: at a certain season of the year they tap it, and bring vessels to receive the wine, of which they draw great quantities, the quality of which is very delicious: the leaves of this tree are of a silky nature: they are large and soft: when they are dried, and pulled to pieces, it has much the same appearance as the English flax, and the inhabitants of Bournou manufacture it for cloathing, &c. This tree likewise produces a plant or substance which has the appearance of a cabbage, and very like it, in taste almost the same: it grows between the

\* It is a generally received opinion in England, that the natives of Africa go entirely unclothed: but this supposition is very unjust; they have a kind of dress so as to appear decent, though it is very slight and thin.

branches. Also the palm-tree produces a nut, something like a cocoa, which contains a kernel, in which is a large quantity of milk, very pleasant to the taste : the shell is of a hard substance, and of a very beautiful appearance, and serves for basons, bowls, &c.

I hope this digression will be forgiven. I was going to observe, that after the duty of our Sabbath was over (on the day in which I was more distressed and afflicted than ever), we were all going home as usual, when a remarkable black cloud arose, and covered the sun ; then followed very heavy rain, and thunder more dreadful than ever I had heard : the heavens roared, and the earth trembled at it : I was highly affected, and cast down ; in so much that I wept sadly, and could not follow my relations and friends home. I was obliged to stop, and felt as if my legs were tied : they seemed to shake under me : so I stood still, being in great fear of the MAN of POWER, that I was persuaded in myself lived above. One of my young companions (who entertained a particular friendship for me, and I for him) came back for me : he asked me, why I stood still in such very hard rain ? I only said to him, that my legs were weak, and I could not come faster : he was much affected to see me cry, and took me by the hand, and said he would lead me home ; which he did. My mother was greatly alarmed at my tarrying out in such terrible weather : she asked me many questions, such as, what I did so for, and if I was well ? My dear mother, said I, pray, tell me, who is the GREAT MAN of POWER that makes the thunder ? She said, there was no power but the sun, moon, and stars ; that they made all our country. I then inquired, how all our people came ? She answered me, from one another ; and so carried me to many generations back. Then said I, who made the first man ? and who made the first cow, and the first lion ? and where does the

fly come from, as no one can make him? My mother seemed in great trouble: she was apprehensive that my senses were impaired, or that I was foolish. My father came in, and seeing her in grief, asked the cause: but when she related our conversation to him, he was exceedingly angry with me, and told me he would punish me severely, if ever I was so troublesome again; so that I resolved never to say any thing more to him. But I grew very unhappy in myself. My relations and acquaintance endeavoured, by all the means they could think on, to divert me, by taking me to ride upon goats (which is much the custom of our country), and to shoot with a bow and arrow; but I experienced no satisfaction at all in any of these things; nor could I be easy by any means whatever. My parents were very unhappy to see me so dejected and melancholy.

About this time there came a merchant from the Gold Coast (the third city in Guinea): he traded with the inhabitants of our country in ivory, &c.: he took great notice of my unhappy situation, and inquired into the cause: he expressed vast concern for me; and said, if my parents would part with me for a little while, and let him take me home with him, it would be of more service to me than any thing they could do for me. He told me, that if I would go with him, I should see houses, with wings to them, walk upon the water, and should also see the white folks; and that he had many sons of my age, who should be my companions; and he added to all this, that he would bring me safe back again soon. I was highly pleased with the account of this strange place, and was very desirous of going. I seemed sensible of a secret impulse upon my mind, which I could not resist, that seemed to tell me I must go. When my dear mother saw that I was willing to leave them, she spoke to my father, and grandfather, and the rest of my relations, who all agreed, that I should accompany the merchant to the Gold Coast. I was

the more willing, as my brothers and sisters despised me, and looked on me with contempt, on the account of my unhappy disposition; and even my servants slighted me, and disregarded all I said to them. I had one sister who was always exceeding fond of me, and I loved her entirely; her name was Logwy; she was quite white and fair, with fine light hair, though my father and mother were black. I was truly concerned to leave my beloved sister; and she cried most sadly to part with me, wringing her hands, and discovering every sign of grief that can be imagined. Indeed if I could have known, when I left my friends and country, that I should never return to them again, my misery on that occasion would have been inexpressible. All my relations were sorry to part with me. My dear mother came with me on a camel more than three hundred miles. The first of our journey lay chiefly through woods. At night we secured ourselves from the wild beasts; by making fires all around us: we and our camels kept within the circle, or we must have been torn to pieces by the lions, and other wild creatures, that roared terribly as soon as night came on, and continued to do so till morning. There can be little said in favour of the country through which we passed; only there is a valley of marble that we came through, which is unspeakably beautiful. On each side of this valley are exceedingly high and almost inaccessible mountains. Some of these pieces of marble are of prodigious length and breadth, but of different sizes and colour, and shaped in a variety of forms in a wonderful manner. It is most of it veined with gold, mixed with striking and beautiful colours; so that when the sun darts upon it, it is as pleasing a sight as can be imagined. The merchant that brought me from Bournou, was in partnership with another gentleman who accompanied us: he was very unwilling that he should take me from home, as, he said, he foresaw many diffi-

culties that would attend my going with them. He endeavoured to prevail on the merchant to throw me into a very deep pit that was in the valley ; but he refused to listen to him, and said he was resolved to take care of me : but the other was greatly dissatisfied ; and when we came to a river, which we were obliged to pass through, he purposed throwing me in, and drowning me ; but the merchant would not consent to it, so that I was preserved.

We travelled till about four o'clock every day, and then began to make preparations for night, by cutting down large quantities of wood, to make fires, to preserve us from the wild beasts. I had a very unhappy and discontented journey, being in continual fear that the people I was with would murder me. I often reflected, with extreme regret, on the kind friends I had left ; and the idea of my dear mother frequently drew tears from my eyes. I cannot recollect how long we were going from Bournou to the Gold Coast ; but as there is no shipping nearer to Bournou than that city, it was tedious in travelling so far by land, being upwards of a thousand miles. I was heartily rejoiced when we arrived at the end of our journey : I now vainly imagined that all my troubles and inquietudes would terminate here ; but could I have looked into futurity, I should have perceived that I had much more to suffer than I had before experienced, and that they had as yet barely commenced.

I was now more than a thousand miles from home, without a friend, or any means to procure one. Soon after I came to the merchant's house, I heard the drums beat remarkably loud, and the trumpets blow. The persons accustomed to this employ, are obliged to go on a very high structure appointed for that purpose, that the sound may be heard at a great distance. They are higher than the steeples are in England. I was mightily pleased with sounds so entirely new to me, and was very



inquisitive to know the cause of this rejoicing, and asked many questions concerning it. I was answered, that it was meant as a compliment to me, because I was grandson to the king of Bournou.

This account gave me a secret pleasure : but I was not suffered long to enjoy this satisfaction ; for, in the evening of the same day, two of the merchant's sons (boys about my own age) came running to me, and told me, that the next day I was to die ; for the king intended to behead me. I replied, that I was sure it could not be true ; for that I came there to play with them, and to see houses walk upon the water with wings to them, and the white folks : but I was soon informed, that their king imagined I was sent by my father as a spy, and would make such discoveries, at my return home, that would enable them to make war with the greater advantage to ourselves ; and for these reasons he had resolved I should never return to my native country. When I heard this, I suffered misery that cannot be described. I wished a thousand times that I had never left my friends and country. But still the ALMIGHTY was pleased to work miracles for me.

The morning I was to die, I was washed, and all my gold ornaments made bright and shining ; and then carried to the palace, where the king was to behead me himself (as is the custom of the place). He was seated upon a throne, at the top of an exceeding large yard, or court, which you must go through to enter the palace : it is as wide and spacious as a large field in England. I had a lane of life-guards to go through. I guessed it to be about three hundred paces.

I was conducted by my friend, the merchant, about half way up : then he durst proceed no further. I went up to the king alone : I went with an undaunted courage ; and it pleased God to melt the heart of the king, who sat with his scymitar in his hand, ready to behead me ; yet, being himself

so affected, he dropped it out of his hand, and took me upon his knee, and wept over me. I put my right hand round his neck, and pressed him to my heart. He sat me down, and blessed me: and added, that he would not kill me; and that I should not go home, but be sold for a slave. Then I was conducted back again to the merchant's house.

The next day he took me on board a French brig; but the captain did not chuse to buy me: he said I was too small; so the merchant took me home with him again.

The partner, whom I have spoken of as my enemy, was very angry to see me return, and again purposed putting an end to my life; for he represented to the other, that I should bring them into troubles and difficulties, and that I was so little that no person would buy me.

The merchant's resolution began to waver, and I was indeed afraid that I should be put to death: but however he said he would try me once more.

A few days after, a Dutch ship came into the harbour, and they carried me on board, in hopes that the captain would purchase me. As they went, I heard them agree, that if they could not sell me then, they would throw me overboard. I was in extreme agonies when I heard this; and as soon as ever I saw the Dutch captain, I ran to him, and put my arms round him, and said, Father, save me (for I knew that if he did not buy me, I should be treated very ill, or possibly murdered): and though he did not understand my language, yet it pleased the ALMIGHTY to influence him in my behalf; and he bought me for two yards of check, which is of more value there than in England.

When I left my dear mother I had a large quantity of gold about me, as is the custom of our country: it was made into rings; and they were linked into one another, and formed into a kind of chain, and so put round my neck, arms, and legs; and a



large piece hung at one ear, almost in the shape of a pear. I found all this troublesome, and was glad when my new master took it from me. I was now washed, and cloathed in the Dutch or English manner. My master grew very fond of me, and I loved him exceedingly: I watched every look; was always ready when he wanted me; and endeavoured to convince him, by every action, that my only pleasure was to serve him well. I have since thought that he must have been a serious man. His actions corresponded very well with such a character. He used to read prayers in public to the ship's crew every Sabbath-day: and when first I saw him read, I was never so surpris'd in my whole life as when I saw the book talk to my master; for I thought it did, as I observed him to look upon it, and move his lips. I wish'd it would do so to me. As soon as my master had done reading, I followed him to the place where he put the book, being mightily delighted with it, and when nobody saw me, I opened it, and put my ear down close upon it, in great hope that it would say something to me; but was very sorry, and greatly disappointed, when I found it would not speak: this thought immediately presented itself to me, that every body and every thing despis'd me because I was black.

I was exceedingly sea-sick at first; but when I became more accustom'd to the sea, it wore off. My master's ship was bound for Barbadoes. When we came there, he thought fit to speak of me to several gentlemen of his acquaintance; and one of them express'd a particular desire to see me. He had a great mind to buy me: but the captain could not immediately be prevail'd on to part with me: but however, as the gentleman seem'd very solicitous, he at length let me go; and I was sold for fifty dollars (four-and-sixpenny pieces in English). My new master's name was Vanhorn, a young gentleman: his home was in New England, in the city

of New-York ; to which place he took me with him: He dressed me in his livery, and was very good to me. My chief business was to wait at table and tea, and clean knives; and I had a very easy place. The servants used to curse and swear surprizingly; which I learned faster than any thing: it was almost the first English I could speak. If any of them affronted me, I was sure to call upon God to damn them immediately: but I was broke of it all at once, occasioned by the correction of an old black servant that lived in the family. One day I had just cleaned the knives for dinner, when one of the maids took one to cut bread and butter with: I was very angry with her, and called upon God to damn her; when this old black man told me, I must not say so. I asked him why? He replied, there was a wicked man called the Devil, that lived in hell, and would take all that said these words, and put them in the fire, and burn them. This terrified me greatly; and I was entirely broke of swearing. Soon after this, as I was placing the china for tea, my mistress came into the room just as the maid had been cleaning it: the girl had unfortunately sprinkled the wainscot with the mop; at which my mistress was angry: the girl very foolishly answered her again; which made her worse, and she called upon God to damn her. I was vastly concerned to hear this, as she was a fine young lady, and very good to me, insomuch that I could not help speaking to her, Madam, says I, you must not say so. Why, says she? Because there is a black man, called the Devil, that lives in hell, and he will put you in the fire, and burn you, and I shall be very sorry for that. Who told you this, replied my lady? Old Ned, says I. Very well was all her answer. But she told my master of it: and he ordered that Old Ned should be tied up and whipped; and was never suffered to come into the kitchen with the rest of the servants afterwards. My mistress was not angry with me,

but rather diverted with my simplicity; and by way of talk, she repeated what I had said to many of her acquaintance that visited her. Among the rest, Mr. Freelandhouse, a very gracious good minister, heard it, and he took a great deal of notice of me, and desired my master to part with me to him. He would not hear of it at first; but being greatly persuaded, he let me go; and Mr. Freelandhouse gave 50*l.* for me. He took me home with him, made me kneel down, put my two hands together, and prayed for me; and every night and morning he did the same. I could not make out what it was for, nor the meaning of it, nor what they spoke to when they talked. I thought it comical; but I liked it very well. After I had been a little while with my new master, I grew more familiar, and asked him the meaning of prayer (I could hardly speak English to be understood): he took great pains with me, and made me understand that he prayed to GOD, who lived in heaven; that He was my Father and best Friend. I told him, that this must be a mistake: that *my* father lived at Bournou; and I wanted very much to see him, and likewise my dear mother and sister, and I wished he would be so good as to send me home to them; and I added all I could think of, to induce him to convey me back. I appeared in great trouble; and my good master was so much affected, that the tears ran down his face. He told me, that GOD was a GREAT and GOOD SPIRIT; that He created all the world, and every person and thing in it, in Ethiopia, Africa, and America, and every where. I was delighted when I heard this: there, says I, I always thought so when I lived at home! Now if I had wings like an eagle, I would fly, to tell my dear mother, that GOD is greater than the sun, moon, and stars; and that they were made by Him.

I was exceedingly pleased with this information of my master's, because it corresponded so well

with my own opinion; I thought now if I could but get home, I should be wiser than all my country-folks, my grandfather, or father, or mother, or any of them. But though I was somewhat enlightened by this information of my master's, yet I had no other knowledge of God, but that he was a GOOD SPIRIT, and created every body, and every thing. I never was sensible in myself, nor had any one ever told me, that he would punish the wicked, and love the just. I was only glad that I had been told there was a God, because I had always thought so.

My dear kind master grew very fond of me, as was his lady. She put me to school: but I was uneasy at that, and did not like to go; but my master and mistress requested me to learn in the gentlest terms, and persuaded me to attend my school without any anger at all, that at last I came to like it better, and learned to read pretty well. My schoolmaster was a good man, named Vanosdore, and he was very indulgent to me. It was in this state, when, one Sunday, I heard my master preach from these words, out of Rev. i. 7. "Behold, He cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him." These words affected me excessively; I was in great agonies, because I thought my master directed them to me only; and I fancied, that he observed me with unusual earnestness. I was farther confirmed in this belief, as I looked round the church, and could see no one person beside myself in such grief and distress as I was: I began to think that my master hated me, and was very desirous to go home to my own country; for I thought that if God did come (as he said), He would be sure to be most angry with me, as I did not know what He was, nor had ever heard of Him before.

I went home in great trouble, but said nothing to any body. I was somewhat afraid of my master; I thought he disliked me. The next text I heard

him preach from was, Heb. xii. 24. "Follow peace  
 " with all men, and holiness, without which no  
 " man shall see the Lord." He preached the law  
 so severely, that it made me tremble. He said,  
 that God would judge the whole world, Ethiopia,  
 Asia, and Africa, and every where. I was now ex-  
 cessively perplexed, and undetermined what to do;  
 as I had now reason to believe my situation would be  
 equally bad to go as to stay. I kept these thoughts  
 to myself, and said nothing to any person whatever.

I should have complained to my good mistress of  
 this great trouble of mind, but she had been a little  
 strange to me for several days before this happened,  
 occasioned by a story told of me by one of the maids.  
 The servants were all jealous, and envied me the re-  
 gard and favour shewn me by my master and mis-  
 tress; and the Devil, being always ready and diligent  
 in wickedness, had influenced this girl to make a lie  
 on me. This happened about hay-harvest. One  
 day when I was unloading the waggon, to put the  
 hay into the barn, she watched an opportunity, in  
 my absence, to take the fork out of the stick, and  
 hide it: when I came again to my work, and could  
 not find it, I was a good deal vexed, but I conclud-  
 ed it was dropped somewhere among the hay; so I  
 went and bought another with my own money: when  
 the girl saw that I had another, she was so malicious,  
 that she told my mistress I was very unfaithful, and  
 not the person she took me for; and that she knew  
 I had, without my master's permission, ordered  
 many things in his name that he must pay for; and,  
 as a proof of my carelessness, produced the fork she  
 had taken out of the stick, and said she had found  
 it out of doors. My lady, not knowing the truth  
 of these things, was a little shy to me, till she  
 mentioned it; and then I soon cleared myself, and  
 convinced her that these accusations were false.

I continued in a most unhappy state for many  
 days. My good mistress insisted on knowing what



was the matter. When I made known my situation, she gave me John Bunyan on the Holy War to read. I found his experience similar to my own; which gave me reason to suppose he must be a bad man: as I was convinced of my own corrupt nature, and the misery of my own heart, and as he acknowledged that he was likewise in the same condition, I experienced no relief at all in reading his work, but rather the reverse. I took the book to my lady, and informed her, I did not like it at all; it was concerning a wicked man as bad as myself; I did not chuse to read it; and I desired her to give me another, wrote by a better man, that was holy and without sin. She assured me, that John Bunyan was a good man; but she could not convince me: I thought him to be too much like myself to be upright, as his experience seemed to answer with my own.

I am very sensible that nothing but the great power and unspeakable mercies of the LORD could relieve my soul from the heavy burden it laboured under at that time. A few days after, my master gave me Baxter's Call to the Unconverted. This was no relief to me neither: on the contrary, it occasioned as much distress in me as the other had before done, as it invited all to come to CHRIST, and I found myself so wicked and miserable that I could not come. This consideration threw me into agonies that cannot be described, insomuch that I even attempted to put an end to my life. I took one of the large case-knives, and went into the stable, with an intent to destroy myself; and as I endeavoured with all my strength to force the knife into my side, it bent double. I was instantly struck with horror at the thoughts of my own rashness; and my conscience told me, that had I succeeded in this attempt, I should probably have gone to hell.

I could find no relief, nor the least shadow of comfort. The extreme distress of my mind so affected my health, that I continued very ill for three days.

and nights; and would admit of no means to be taken for my recovery, though my lady was very kind, and sent many things to me; but I rejected every means of relief, and wished to die. I would not go into my own bed, but lay in the stable upon straw. I felt all the horrors of a troubled conscience, so hard to be borne; and saw all the vengeance of GOD ready to overtake me. I was sensible that there was no way for me to be saved, unless I came to CHRIST, and I could not come to Him. I thought that it was impossible He should receive such a sinner as me.

The last night that I continued in this place, in the midst of my distress, these words were brought home upon my mind, "Behold the LAMB of GOD." I was something comforted at this, and began to grow easier; and wished for day, that I might find these words in my Bible. I rose very early the following morning, and went to my schoolmaster, Mr. Vanosdore, and communicated the situation of my mind to him: he was greatly rejoiced to find me inquiring the way to Zion; and blessed the LORD, who had worked so wonderfully for me a poor Heathen. I was more familiar with this good gentleman than with my master, or any other person; and found myself more at liberty to talk to him: he encouraged me greatly, and prayed with me frequently, and I was always benefited by his discourse.

About a quarter of a mile from my master's house stood a remarkably large fine oak-tree, in the midst of a wood. I often used to be employed there, in cutting down trees (a work I was very fond of); and I seldom failed going to this place every day, sometimes twice a-day, if I could be spared. It was the highest pleasure I ever experienced to sit under this oak; for there I used to pour out all my complaints before the LORD: and when I had any particular grievance, I used to go there, and talk to

the tree, and tell my sorrows, as if it were to a friend.

Here I often lamented my own wicked heart, and undone state; and found more comfort and consolation than I ever was sensible of before. Whenever I was treated with ridicule or contempt, I used to come here, and find peace. I now began to relish the book my master gave me, Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, and took great delight in it. I was always glad to be employed in cutting wood; it was a great part of my business, and I followed it with delight, as I was then quite alone, and my heart lifted up to God; and I was enabled to pray continually: and blessed for ever be his holy name, he faithfully answered my prayers. I can never be thankful enough to ALMIGHTY GOD, for the many comfortable opportunities I experienced there.

It is possible the circumstance I am going to relate will not gain credit with many; but this I know, that the joy and comfort it conveyed to me cannot be expressed, and only conceived by those who have experienced the like.

I was one day in a most delightful frame of mind, my heart so overflowed with love and gratitude to the Author of all my comforts; I was so drawn out of myself, and so filled and awed by the presence of God, that I saw (or thought I saw) light inexpressible dart down from heaven upon me, and shone around me for the space of a minute. I continued on my knees, and joy unspeakable took possession of my soul. The peace and serenity which filled my mind after this, was wonderful, and cannot be told. I would not have changed situations, or been any one but myself, for the whole world. I blessed God for my poverty, that I had no worldly riches or grandeur to draw my heart from Him. I wished at that time, if it had been possible for me, to have continued on that spot for ever. I felt an unwillingness in myself to have any thing more to do



with the world, or to mix with society again. I seemed to possess a full assurance that my sins were forgiven me. I went home all my way rejoicing; and this text of Scripture came full upon my mind, "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." The first opportunity that presented itself, I went to my old schoolmaster, and made known to him the happy state of my soul; who joined with me in praise to God, for his mercy to me the vilest of sinners. I was now perfectly easy, and had hardly a wish to make beyond what I possessed, when my temporal comforts were all blasted, by the death of my dear and worthy master, Mr. Freelandhouse, who was taken from this world rather suddenly: he had but a short illness, and died of a fever. I held his hand in mine when he departed. He told me he had given me my freedom; I was at liberty to go where I would. He added, that he had always prayed for me, and hoped I should be kept unto the end. My master left me by his will ten pounds, and my freedom.

I found that if he had lived, it was his intention to take me with him to Holland, as he had often mentioned me to some friends of his there, that were desirous to see me: but I chose to continue with my mistress, who was as good to me as if she had been my mother.

The loss of Mr Freelandhouse distressed me greatly; but I was rendered still more unhappy, by the clouded and perplexed situation of my mind: the great enemy of my soul being ready to torment me, would present my own misery to me in such striking light, and distress me with doubts, fears, and such a deep sense of my own unworthiness, that, after all the comfort and encouragement I had received, I was often tempted to believe I should be a

cast-away at last. The more I saw of the beauty and glory of God, the more I was humbled under a sense of my own vileness. I often repaired to my old place of prayer : I seldom came away without consolation. One day this scripture was wonderfully applied to my mind, “ And ye are complete “ in Him, which is the head of all principalities “ and powers.” The LORD was pleased to comfort me, by the application of many gracious promises, at times when I was ready to sink under my trouble. “ Wherefore he is also able to save them “ to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, “ seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for “ them. Heb. x. 14. For by one offering he hath “ perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

My kind indulgent mistress lived but two years after my master. Her death was a great affliction to me. She left five sons, all gracious young men, and ministers of the gospel. I continued with them all, one after another, till they died : they lived but four years after their parents, when it pleased God to take them to himself. I was left quite destitute, without a friend in the world. But I who had so often experienced the goodness of God, trusted in Him to do what He pleased with me. In this helpless condition I went in the wood to prayer, as usual ; and though the snow was a considerable height, I was not sensible of cold, or any other inconveniency. At times indeed when I saw the world frowning round me, I was tempted to think that the LORD had forsaken me. I found great relief from the contemplation of these words, in Isaiah xlix. 16. “ Behold I have graven thee on the “ palms of my hands ; thy walls are continually “ before me.” And very many comfortable promises were sweetly applied to me. Psalm lxix. 34. “ My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing “ that is gone out of my lips.” Heb. xvi. 17, 18: Philip. i. 6. and several more.

As I had now lost all my dear and valued friends, every place in the world was alike to me. I had for a great while entertained a desire to come to England. I imagined that all the inhabitants of this island were holy, because all those that had visited my master from thence were good (Mr. Whitefield was his particular friend), and the authors of the books that had been given me were all English. But above all the places in the world I wished to see Kidderminster; for I could not but think that on the spot where Mr. Baxter had lived, and preached, the people must be all righteous.

The situation of my affairs required that I should tarry a little longer in New York, as I was somewhat in debt, and embarrassed how to pay it. About this time a young gentleman, who was a particular acquaintance of one of my young masters, pretended to be a friend to me, and promised to pay my debts, which were three pounds; and he assured me he would never expect the money again. But in less than a month he came and demanded it; and when I assured him I had nothing to pay, he threatened to sell me. Though I knew he had no right to do that, yet as I had no friend in the world to go to, it alarmed me greatly. At length he proposed my going a-privateering, that I might, by these means, be enabled to pay him; to which I agreed. Our captain's name was ————. I went in character of a cook to him. Near St. Domingo we came up with five French ships, merchant-men. We had a very smart engagement, which continued from eight in the morning till three in the afternoon, when victory declared on our side. Soon after this we were met by three English ships, which joined us, and that encouraged us to attack a fleet of thirty-six ships. We boarded the three first, and then followed the others; and had the same success with twelve; but the rest escaped us. There was a great deal of bloodshed, and I

was near death several times; but the LORD preserved me.

I met with many enemies, and much persecution among the sailors. One of them was particularly unkind to me, and studied ways to vex and tease me. I cannot help mentioning one circumstance that hurt me more than all the rest, which was, that he snatched a book out of my hand that I was very fond of, and used frequently to amuse myself with, and threw it into the sea. But what is remarkable, he was the first that was killed in our engagement. I do not pretend to say, that this happened because he was not my friend; but I thought it was a very awful providence, to see how the enemies of the LORD are cut off.

Our captain was a cruel hard-hearted man. I was excessively sorry for the prisoners we took in general; but the pitiable case of one young gentleman grieved me to the heart. He appeared very amiable; was strikingly handsome. Our captain took four thousand pounds from him: but that did not satisfy him, as he imagined he was possessed of more, and had some where concealed it; so that the captain threatened him with death: at which he appeared in the deepest distress, took the buckles out of his shoes, and untied his hair, which was very fine and long, and in which several valuable rings were fastened. He came into the cabin to me, and in the most obliging terms imaginable asked for something to eat and drink; which when I gave him, he was so thankful and pretty in his manner that my heart bled for him; and I heartily wished, that I could have spoken in any language in which the ship's crew would not have understood me, that I might have let him know his danger, for I heard the captain say he was resolved upon his death: and he put his barbarous design in execution; for he took him on shore with one of the sailors, and there they shot him.

This circumstance affected me exceedingly; I could not put him out of my mind a long while. When we returned to New York, the captain divided the prize-money among us. When I was called upon to receive my part, I waited upon Mr. ——— (the gentleman that paid my debt, and was the occasion of my going abroad), to know if he would go with me to receive my money, or if I should bring him what I owed. He chose to go with me: and when the captain laid my money on the table (it was an hundred and thirty-five pounds), I desired Mr. ——— to take what I was indebted to him: he swept it all into his handkerchief, and would never be prevailed on to give a farthing of money, nor any thing at all beside. And he likewise secured a hoghead of sugar, which was my due from the same ship. The captain was very angry with him for this piece of cruelty to me, as was every other person that heard it. But I have reason to believe (as he was one of the principal merchants in the city) that he transacted business for him, and on that account did not chuse to quarrel with him.

At this time a very worthy gentleman, a wine-merchant, his name Duncum, took me under his protection, and would have recovered my money for me, if I had chose it: but I told him to let it alone; that I would rather be quiet. I believed that it would not prosper with him: and so it happened; for by a series of losses and misfortunes he became poor, and was soon after drowned, as he was on a party of pleasure: the vessel was driven out to sea, and struck against a rock, by which means every soul perished.

I was very much distressed when I heard it, and felt greatly for his family, who were reduced to very low circumstances. I never knew how to set a proper value on money: if I had but a little meat and drink, to supply the present necessities of life,



I never wished for more ; and when I had any, I always gave it if ever I saw an object in distress : if it was not for my dear wife and children, I should pay as little regard to money now as I did at that time. I continued some time with Mr. Dunscomb as his servant : he was very kind to me. But I had a vast inclination to visit England ; and wished continually, that it would please Providence to make a clear way for me to see this island. I entertained a notion, that if I could get to England, I should never more experience either cruelty or ingratitude ; so that I was very desirous to get among Christians. I knew Mr. Whitefield very well. I had heard him preach often at New York. In this disposition I listed in the 28th regiment of foot, who were designed for Martinico, in the late war. We went in admiral Pocock's fleet from New York to Barbadoes ; from thence to Martinico. When that was taken, we proceeded to the Havannah, and took that place likewise. There I got discharged.

I was then worth about thirty pounds : but I never regarded money in the least ; nor would I tarry to receive my prize-money, lest I should lose my chance of going to England. I went with the Spanish prisoners to Spain, and came to Old England with the English prisoners. I cannot describe my joy when we were within sight of Portsmouth. But I was astonished when we landed, to hear the inhabitants of that place curse and swear, and otherwise profane. I expected to find nothing but goodness, gentleness, and meekness in this Christian land : I then suffered great perplexities of mind.

I inquired if any serious Christian people resided there : the woman I made this inquiry of answered me in the affirmative ; and added, that she was one of them. I was heartily glad to hear her say so. I thought I could give her my whole heart. She kept a public house. I deposited with her all the money that I had not an immediate occasion for,

as I thought it would be safer with her: it was twenty-five guineas; but six of them I desired her to lay out to the best advantage, to buy me some shirts, hat, and some other necessaries. I made her a present of a very handsome large looking-glass that I brought with me from Martinico, in order to recompense her for the trouble I had given her. I must do this woman the justice to acknowledge, that she did lay out some little for my use; but the nineteen guineas, and part of the six, with my watch, she would not return, but denied that I ever gave them to her.

I soon perceived that I was got among bad people, who defrauded me of my money and watch; and that all my promised happiness was blasted. I had no friend but God, and I prayed to Him earnestly. I could scarcely believe it possible, that the place where so many eminent Christians had lived and preached could abound with so much wickedness and deceit. I thought it worse than Sodom (considering the great advantages they have): I cried like a child, and that almost continually: at length God heard my prayers, and raised me a friend indeed.

This publican had a brother who lived on Portsmouth Common: his wife was a very serious good woman. When she heard of the treatment I had met with, she came and inquired into my real situation, and was greatly troubled at the ill usage I had received, and took me home to her own house. I began now to rejoice, and my prayer was turned into praise. She made use of all the arguments in her power, to prevail on her who had wronged me to return my watch and money; but it was to no purpose; as she had given me no receipt, and as I had nothing to show for it, I could not demand it. My good friend was excessively angry with her, and obliged her to give me back four guineas, which she said she gave me out of charity; though in fact

it was my own, and much more. She would have employed some rougher means to oblige her to give up my money, but I would not suffer her; Let it go, says I, my GOD is in heaven. Still I did not mind my loss in the least; all that grieved me was, that I had been disappointed in not finding some Christian friends, with whom I hoped to enjoy a little sweet and comfortable society.

I thought the best method that I could take now, was to go to London, and find out Mr. Whitefield, who was the only living soul I knew in England, and get him to direct me to some way or other to procure a living, without being troublesome to any person. I took leave of my Christian friend at Portsmouth, and went in the stage to London. A creditable tradesman in the city, who went up with me in the stage, offered to show me the way to Mr. Whitefield's tabernacle. Knowing that I was a perfect stranger, I thought it very kind, and accepted his offer: but he obliged me to give him half-a-crown for going with me; and likewise insisted on my giving him five shillings more, for conducting me to Dr. Gifford's meeting.

I began now to entertain a very different idea of the inhabitants of England than what I had figured to myself before I came among them. Mr. Whitefield received me very friendly, was heartily glad to see me, and directed me to a proper place to board and lodge in Petticoat Lane, till he could think of some way to settle me in; and paid for my lodging, and all my expences. The morning after I came to my new lodging, as I was at breakfast with the gentlewoman of the house, I heard the noise of some looms over our heads. I inquired what it was: she told me a person was weaving silk. I expressed a great desire to see it, and asked if I might: she told me she would go up with me; she was sure I should be very welcome. She was as good as her word; and as soon as we entered the room, the



person that was weaving looked about, and smiled upon us; and I loved her from that moment. She asked me many questions, and I in return talked a great deal to her. I found she was a member of Mr. Allen's meeting; and I began to entertain a good opinion of her, though I was almost afraid to indulge this inclination, lest she should prove like all the rest I had met with at Portsmouth, &c. and which had almost given me a dislike to all white women. But after a short acquaintance, I had the happiness to find she was very different, and quite sincere; and I was not without hope that she entertained some esteem for me. We often went together to hear Dr. Gifford; and as I had always a propensity to relieve every object in distress, as far as I was able, I used to give all that complained to me, sometimes half a guinea at a time, as I did not understand the real value of it. This gracious good woman took great pains to correct and advise me in that and many other respects.

After I had been in London about six weeks, I was recommended to the notice of some of my late master's (Mr. Freelandhouse) acquaintance, who had heard him speak frequently of me. I was much persuaded by them to go to Holland. My master lived there before he bought me: and used to speak of me so respectfully among his friends there, that it raised in them a curiosity to see me; particularly the gentlemen engaged in the ministry, who expressed a desire to hear my experience, and examine me. I found that it was my good old master's design that I should have gone, if he had lived: for which reason I resolved upon going to Holland; and informed my dear friend, Mr. Whitefield, of my intention: he was much averse to my going at first; but after I gave him my reasons, appeared very well satisfied. I likewise informed my Betty (the good woman that I have mentioned above) of my determination to go to Holland; and I told her,

that I believed she was to be my wife : that if it was the LORD's will, I desired it, but not else. She made me very little answer : but has since told me, she did not think it at that time.

I embarked at Tower-wharf at four o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Amsterdam the next day by three o'clock in the afternoon. I had several letters of recommendation to my old master's friends, who received me very graciously. Indeed one of the chief ministers was particularly good to me : he kept me at his house a long while, and took great pleasure in asking questions, which I answered with delight, being always ready to say, " Come unto me all ye that fear GOD, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul." I cannot but admire the footsteps of Providence, astonished that I should be so wonderfully preserved. Though the grandson of a king, I have wanted bread, and should have been glad with the hardest crust I ever saw. I who, at home, was surrounded and guarded by slaves, so that no indifferent person might approach me, and clothed with gold, have been inhumanly threatened with death, and frequently wanted cloathing to defend me from the inclemency of the weather ; yet I never murmured, nor was I discontented. I am willing, and even desirous to be counted as nothing, a stranger in the world, and a pilgrim here, for " I know that my REDEEMER liveth ;" and I am thankful for every trial and trouble that I have met with, as I am not without hope that they have been all sanctified to me.

The Calvinist ministers desired to hear my experience from myself ; which proposal I was very well pleased with : so I stood before thirty-eight ministers every Thursday, for seven weeks together, and they were all very well satisfied, and persuaded I was what I pretended to be. They wrote down my experience, as I spoke it ; and the LORD ALMIGHTY was with me at that time in a remarkable manner,

and gave me words, and enabled me to answer them; so great was his mercy to take me in hand a poor blind Heathen.

At this time a very rich merchant at AMSTERDAM offered to take me into his family, in the capacity of his butler, and I very willingly accepted it. He was a gracious worthy gentleman, and very good to me. He treated me more like a friend than a servant. I tarried there a twelvemonth; but was not thoroughly contented, as I wanted to see my wife (that is now); and for that reason I wished to return to England. I wrote to her once in my absence; but she did not answer my letter: and I must acknowledge, that if she had, it would have given me a less opinion of her. My master and mistress persuaded me much not to leave them, and likewise their two sons, who entertained a good opinion of me; and if I had found my Betty married on my arrival in England, I should have returned to them again immediately.

My lady purposed my marrying her maid. She was an agreeable young woman, had saved a good deal of money; but I could not fancy her, though she was willing to accept of me: I told her my inclinations were engaged in England, and I could think of no other person. On my return home, I found my Betty disengaged. She had refused several offers in my absence; and told her sister, that she thought, if ever she married, I was to be her husband.

Soon after I came home, I waited on Dr. Gifford, who took me into his family, and was exceedingly good to me. The character of this pious worthy gentleman is well known; my praise can be of no use or signification at all. I hope I shall ever gratefully remember the many favours I have received from him. Soon after I came to Dr. Gifford, I expressed a desire to be admitted into their church, and sit down with them: they told me I

must first be baptized : so I gave in my experience before the church, with which they were very well satisfied ; and I was baptized by Dr. Gifford, with some others. I then made known my intentions of being married ; but I found there were many objections against it, because the person I had fixed on was poor : she was a widow, her husband had left her in debt, and with a child, so that they persuaded me against it out of real regard to me. But I had promised, and was resolved to have her : as I knew her to be a gracious woman, her poverty was no objection to me, as they had nothing else to say against her. When my friends found they could not alter my opinion respecting her, they wrote to Mr. Allen, the minister she attended, to persuade her to leave me ; but he replied, that he would not interfere at all, that we might do as we would. I was resolved that all my wife's little debt should be paid before we were married : so that I sold almost every thing I had, and with all the money I could raise cleared what she owed ; and I never did any thing with a better will in all my life, because I firmly believed that we should be very happy together ; and so it proved, for she was given me from the LORD. I have found her a blessed partner ; and we have never repented, though we have gone through many great troubles and difficulties.

My wife got a very good living by weaving, and could do extremely well : but just at that time there was great disturbance among the weavers ; so that I was afraid to let my wife work, lest they should insist on my joining the rioters, which I could not think of ; and possibly if I had refused to do so, they would have knocked me on the head. So that by these means my wife could get no employ, neither had I work enough to maintain my family. We had not yet been married a year before all these misfortunes overtook us.

Just at this time a gentleman, that seemed much concerned for us, advised me to go into Essex with him, and promised to get me employed. I accepted his kind proposal. He spoke to a friend of his, a Quaker, a gentleman of large fortune, who resided a little way out of the town of Colchester: his name was Hindbarrar. He ordered his steward to set me to work.

There were several employed in the same way with myself. I was very thankful and contented, though my wages were but small. I was allowed but eight-pence a day, and found myself in victuals: but after I had been in this situation for a fortnight, my master being told that a Black was at work for him, had an inclination to see me. He was pleased to talk with me for some time; and at last inquired what wages I had: when I told him, he declared it was too little; and immediately ordered his steward to let me have eighteen-pence a day, which he constantly gave me after; and I then did extremely well.

I did not bring my wife with me: I came first alone; and it was my design, if things answered according to our wishes, to send for her. I was now thinking to desire her to come to me, when I received a letter, to inform me she was just brought to bed, and in want of many necessaries. This news was a great trial to me, and a fresh affliction: but my God, "faithful, and abundant in mercy," forsook me not in this trouble. As I could not read English, I was obliged to apply to some one to read the letter I received relative to my wife. I was directed by the good providence of God to a worthy young gentleman, a Quaker, and friend of my master. I desired he would take the trouble to read my letter for me; which he readily complied with, and was greatly moved and affected at the contents, insomuch that he said he would undertake to make a gathering for me; which he did, and was the first

to contribute to it himself. The money was sent that evening to London, by a person who happened to be going there: nor was this all the goodness that I experienced from these kind friends; for as soon as my wife came about, and was fit to travel, they sent for her to me, and were at the whole expence of her coming; so evidently has the love and mercy of GOD appeared through every trouble that ever I experienced. We went on very comfortably all the summer. We lived in a little cottage near Mr. Handbarrar's house. When the winter came on, I was discharged, as he had no further occasion for me. And now the prospect began to darken upon us again. We thought it most adviseable to move our habitation a little nearer to the town, as the house we lived in was very cold and wet, and ready to tumble down,

The boundless goodness of GOD to me has been so very great, that, with the most humble gratitude, I desire to prostrate myself before him, for I have been wonderfully supported in every affliction. My GOD never left me. I perceived light still through the thickest darkness.

My dear wife and I were now both unemployed: we could get nothing to do. The winter proved remarkably severe, and we were reduced to the greatest distress imaginable. I was always very shy of asking for any thing: I could never beg; neither did I chuse to make known our wants to any person, for fear of offending, as we were entire strangers; but our last bit of bread was gone, and I was obliged to think of something to do for our support. I did not mind for myself at all; but to see my dear wife and children in want pierced me to the heart. I now blamed myself for bringing her from London, as doubtless, had we continued there, we might have found friends to keep us from starving. The snow was at this season remarkably deep; so that we could see no prospect of being relieved. In this



melancholy situation, not knowing what step to pursue, I resolved to make my case known to a gentleman's gardener, who lived near us, and intreat him to employ me; but when I came to him, my courage failed me, and I was ashamed to make known our real situation. I endeavoured all I could to prevail on him to set me to work, but to no purpose; he assured me it was not in his power: but just as I was about to leave him, he asked me if I would accept of some carrots? I took them with great thankfulness, and carried them home. He gave me four: they were very large and fine. We had nothing to make fire with, so consequently could not boil them; but was glad to have them to eat raw. Our youngest child was quite an infant; so that my wife was obliged to chew it, and fed her in that manner for several days. We allowed ourselves but one every day, lest they should not last till we could get some other supply. I was unwilling to eat at all myself; nor would I take any the last day that we continued in this situation, as I could not bear the thought that my dear wife and children would be in want of every means of support. We lived in this manner till our carrots were all gone: then my wife began to lament because of our poor babies: but I comforted her all I could; still hoping and believing, that my God would not let us die, but that it would please Him to relieve us; which He did by almost a miracle.

We went to bed as usual before it was quite dark (as we had neither fire nor candle); but had not been there long before some person knocked at the door, and inquired, if James Albert lived there? I answered in the affirmative; and rose immediately. As soon as I opened the door, I found it was the servant of an eminent attorney who resided at Colchester. He asked me, how it was with me? If I was not almost starved? I burst out a-crying, and

told him I was indeed. He said his master supposed so, and that he wanted to speak with me, and I must return with him. This gentleman's name was Daniel: he was a sincere good Christian. He used to stand and talk with me frequently when I worked in the road for Mr. Handbarrar, and would have employed me himself, if I had wanted work. When I came to his house, he told me, that he had thought a good deal about me of late, and was apprehensive that I must be in want, and could not be satisfied till he sent to inquire after me. I made known my distress to him: at which he was greatly affected; and generously gave me a guinea, and promised to be kind to me in future. I could not help exclaiming, O the boundless mercies of my God! I prayed unto Him, and He has heard me; I trusted in Him, and He has preserved me: where shall I begin to praise Him, or how shall I love Him enough?

I went immediately and bought some bread, and cheese, and coal, and carried it home. My dear wife was rejoiced to see me return with something to eat. She instantly got up, and dressed our babies, while I made a fire; and the first nobility in the land never made a more comfortable meal. We did not forget to thank the LORD for all his goodness to us. Soon after this, as the spring came on, Mr. Peter Daniel employed me in helping to pull down a house, and rebuilding it. I had then very good work, and full employ. He sent for my wife and children to Colchester, and provided us a house, where we lived very comfortably. I hope I shall always gratefully acknowledge his kindness to myself and family. I worked at this house for more than a year, till it was finished; and after that I was employed by several successively, and was never so happy as when I had something to do; but perceiving the winter coming on, and work rather slack, I was apprehensive that we should

again be in want, or become troublesome to our friends.

I had at this time an offer made me of going to Norwich, and having constant employ. My wife seemed pleased with this proposal, as she supposed she might get work there in the weaving-manufactory, being the business she was brought up to, and more likely to succeed there than any other place; and we thought, as we had an opportunity of moving to a town where we could both be employed, it was most adviseable to do so, and that probably we might settle there for our lives. When this step was resolved on, I went first alone, to see how it would answer; which I very much repented after, for it was not in my power immediately to send my wife any supply, as I fell into the hands of a master that was neither kind nor considerate; and she was reduced to great distress, so that she was obliged to sell the few goods that we had, and when I sent for her, was under the disagreeable necessity of parting with our bed.

When she came to Norwich, I hired a room ready furnished. I experienced a great deal of difference in the carriage of my master, from what I had been accustomed to from some of my other masters. He was very irregular in his payments to me. My wife hired a loom, and wove all the leisure time she had; and we began to do very well, till we were overtaken by fresh misfortunes. Our three poor children fell ill of the small-pox: this was a great trial to us: but still I was persuaded in myself we should not be forsaken; and I did all in my power to keep my dear partner's spirits from sinking. Her whole attention now was taken up with the children, as she could mind nothing else, and all I could get was but little to support a family in such a situation, beside paying for the hire of our room, which I was obliged to omit doing for several weeks: but the woman, to whom we were indebted,

would not excuse us, though I promised she should have the very first money we could get after my children came about ; but she would not be satisfied ; and had the cruelty to threaten us, that if we did not pay her immediately she would turn us all into the street.

The apprehension of this plunged me into the deepest distress, considering the situation of my poor babies ; if they had been in health, I should have less sensible of this misfortune. But my God, still faithful of his promise, raised me a friend : Mr. Henry Gurdney, a Quaker, a gracious gentleman, heard of our distress ; he sent a servant of his own to the woman we hired the room of, paid our rent, and bought all the goods, with my wife's loom, and gave it us all.

Some other gentlemen, hearing of his design, were pleased to assist him in these generous acts, for which we never can be thankful enough. After this, my children soon came about. We began to do pretty well again. My dear wife worked hard and constant, when she could get work : but it was upon a disagreeable footing, as her employ was so uncertain ; sometimes she could get nothing to do, and at other times, when the weavers of Norwich had orders from London, they were so excessively hurried, that the people they employed were often obliged to work on the Sabbath-day ; but this my wife would never do ; and it was matter of uneasiness to us, that we could not get our living in a regular manner, though we were both diligent, industrious, and willing to work. I was far from being happy in my master : he did not use me well. I could scarcely ever get my money from him : but I continued patient, till it pleased God to alter my situation.

My worthy friend, Mr. Gurdney, advised me to follow the employ of chopping chaff ; and bought me an instrument for the purpose. There were

but few people in the town that made this their business beside myself; so that I did very well indeed, and we became easy and happy. But we did not continue long in this comfortable state: many of the inferior people were envious and ill-natured, and set up the same employ, and worked under price, on purpose to get my business from me; and they succeeded so well that I could hardly get any thing to do, and became again unfortunate: nor did this misfortune come alone; for just at this time we lost one of our little girls, who died of a fever. This circumstance occasioned us new troubles; for the Baptist minister refused to bury her, because we were not their members. The parson of the parish denied, because she had never been baptized. I applied to the Quakers; but met with no success. This was one of the greatest trials I ever met with, as we did not know what to do with our poor baby. At length I resolved to dig a grave in the garden behind the house, and bury her there; when the parson of the parish sent for me, to tell me, he would bury the child, but did not chuse to read the burial-service over her. I told him, I did not mind whether he would or not, as the child could not hear it.

We met with a great deal of ill-treatment after this, and found it very difficult to live. We could scarcely get work to do, and were obliged to pawn our cloaths. We were ready to sink under our troubles, when I proposed to my wife to go to Kidderminster, and try if we could do there. I had always an inclination for that place, and now more than ever, as I had heard Mr. Fawcett mentioned in the most respectful manner, as a pious worthy gentleman, and I had seen his name in a favourite book of mine, Baxter's Saint's Everlasting Rest; and as the manufactory of Kidderminster seemed to promise my wife some employment, she readily came into my way of thinking.

I left her once more, and set out for Kidderminster, in order to judge if the situation would suit us. As soon as I came there, I waited immediately on Mr. Fawcett, who was pleased to receive me very kindly; and recommended me to Mr. Watson, who employed me in twisting silk and worsted together. I continued here about a fortnight; and when I thought it would answer our expectation, I returned to Norwich, to fetch my wife. She was then near her time, and too much indisposed: so we were obliged to tarry until she was brought to bed; and as soon as she could conveniently travel, we came to Kidderminster: but we brought nothing with us, as we were obliged to sell all we had, to pay our debts, and the expences of my wife's illness, &c.

Such is our situation at present. My wife, by hard labour at the loom, does every thing that can be expected from her towards the maintenance of our family; and God is pleased to incline the hearts of his people at times to yield us their charitable assistance, being myself, through age and infirmity, able to contribute but little to their support. As pilgrims, and very poor pilgrims, we are travelling through many difficulties towards our heavenly home, and waiting patiently for his gracious call, when the LORD shall deliver us out of the evils of this present world, and bring us to the everlasting glories of the world to come. To Him be praise for ever and ever. Amen.



AN  
AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
CONVERSION AND EXPERIENCE  
OF A  
NEGRO.

SOME years ago an English gentleman, by a particular providence, had occasion to be in North America, where, among other adventures, the following circumstance occurred to him, which is related in his own words.

“ Every day’s observation convinces me that the children of God are made so by his own especial grace and power, and that all means, whether more or less, are equally effectual with him, whenever he is pleased to employ them for conversion.

“ In one of my excursions, while I was in the province of New York, I was walking by myself over a considerable plantation, amused with its husbandry, and comparing it with that of my own country, till I came within a little distance of a middle-aged Negro, who was tilling the ground. I felt a strong inclination, unusual with me, to converse with him. After asking him some little questions about his work, which he answered very sensibly, I wished him to tell me, whether his state of slavery was not disagreeable to him, and whether he would not gladly exchange it for his liberty? “ Massah (said he, looking seriously upon me), I have wife and children; my massah takes care of them, and I have no care to provide any thing; I have a good massah, who teach me to read, and I read good book, that makes me happy.” I am glad, replied I, to hear you say so; and pray what is the good book you read? “ The Bible, massah, God’s own good book.” Do you understand, friend, as well as read this book? for many can read the words well, who cannot get hold of the true and good sense. “ O massah! says he, I read the book much be-

fore I understand ; but at last I felt pain in my heart ; I found things in the book that cut me to pieces." Aye, said I, and what things were they ? " Why, massah, I found that I had bad heart, massah, a very bad heart indeed : I felt pain, that God would destroy me, because I was wicked, and done nothing as I should do. God was holy, and I was very vile and naughty ; so I could have nothing from him but fire and brimstone in hell." In short, he entered into a full account of his convictions of sin, which were indeed as deep and piercing as any I had ever heard of ; and what scriptures came to his mind, which he had read, that both probed him to the bottom of his sinful heart, and were made the means of light and comfort to his soul. I then inquired of him, what ministry or means he made use of ? and found that his master was a Quaker, a plain sort of man, who had taught his slaves to read, but who had not, however, ever conversed with this Negro upon the state of his soul. I asked him likewise, how he got comfort under all this trial ? " O massah ! says he, it was Christ gave me comfort by his dear word. He bade me come unto him, and he would give me rest, for I was very weary and heavy laden." And here he went through a line of the most precious texts in the Bible, shewing me, by his artless comment upon them as he went along, what great things God had done in the course of some years for his soul. Being rather more acquainted with doctrinal truths, and the analogy of the Bible, than he had been, or in his situation could easily be ; I had a mind to try how far a simple, untutored experience, graciously given without the usual means, could carry a man from some speculative errors ; and I therefore asked him several questions about the merit of works, the justification of a sinner, the power of grace, and the like. I own I was as much astonished at, as I admired, the sweet spirit and simplicity of his answers, with the heavenly wisdom that God had put into the mind of this Negro. His discourse, flowing merely from the richness of grace, with a tenderness and expression far " beyond the reach of art," perfectly charmed me. On the other hand, my entering into all his feelings, together with an account to him, which he had never

heard before, that thus and thus the Lord in his mercy dealt with all his children, and had dealt with me, drew streams of joyful tears down his black face, that we looked upon each other, and talked with that inexpressible glow of Christian affection, that made me more than ever believe, what I have often too thoughtlessly professed to believe, *the communion of saints*. I shall never forget, how the poor excellent creature seemed to hang upon my lips, and to eat my very words, when I enlarged upon the love of Christ to poor sinners, the free bounty and tender mercy of God, the frequent and delightful sense he gives of his presence, the faith he bestows in his promises, the victories this faith is enabled to get over trials and temptations, the joy and peace in believing, the hope in life and death, and the glorious expectation of immortality. To have taken off his eager, delighted, animated air and manner, would have been a master-piece for a Reynolds. He had never heard such discourse, nor found the opportunity of hearing it before. He seemed like a man who had been thrown into a new world, and at length had found company. Though my conversation lasted at least two or three hours, I scarce ever enjoyed the happy swiftness of time so sweetly in all my life. We knew not how to part. He would accompany me as far as he might ; and I felt, for my part, such a delight in the artless, favourable, solid, unaffected experience of this dear soul, that I could have been glad to see him often then, or to see his like at any time now. But my situation rendered this impossible. I therefore took an affectionate adieu, with an ardor equal to the warmest and the most ancient friendship, telling him, that neither the colour of his body, nor the condition of his present life, could prevent him from being my dear brother in our dear Saviour ; and that, though we must part now, never to see each other again any more in this world, I had no doubt of our having another joyful meeting in our Father's home, where we should live together, and love one another throughout a long and a happy eternity. " Amen, Amen, my dear massa ; God bless you, and poor me too, for ever and ever." If I had been an angel from heaven, he could not have received me with more evident delight than he did ; nor

could I have considered him with a more sympathetic regard, if he had been a long-known Christian of the good old sort, grown up into my affections in the course of many years."

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IT is written in the Scriptures, and fulfilled in the experience of real Christians, *They shall be all taught of God*, Isa. vi. 45. The teaching of God the Spirit, by the word, was most evident in the case of this poor Negro. The word of God was the instrument of his regeneration, James i. 18. By this, as he expressed himself, he was brought to feel pain in his heart—to fear that God would destroy him—to see the badness of his heart—to see the evil of all his actions;—in short, to become a true penitent. It was also from the word of God that he derived comfort. The promise of rest to the weary and heavy laden, was precious to his soul; it was "Christ who gave him comfort by his dear word;" and thus being made happy by reading "God's own good book," his mind was reconciled to his station, and he lived contented in the lowest state of servitude.

Reader, this Negro was a *Christian*; a Bible Christian. He had not indeed the outward *form* of godliness, but he had the *power*.—How is it with you? You were born in a Christian country—have *read* the Bible—have *heard* the gospel; but what have you *felt*? You have the *form*; but where is the *power*?—Let conscience answer the important question!

On the whole, let us observe the honour that God puts on the use of his holy word; let us be thankful that we have it in our own mother-tongue; and let us read, and recommend the reading of it, with increasing diligence.

THE END.